

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2007 LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM (LIP) GUIDELINES TIER 2 GRANTS

Included in this document are:

Section A. Landowner Incentive Program Final Implementation Guidelines (2007) Pages 2-7

Section B. Landowner Incentive Program Tier 2 National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance (2007) Pages 8-11

Definitions of Terms Used in These Guidelines

“Species-at-risk” is defined as any species identified as a “species of greatest conservation need” in a State’s Wildlife Action Plan (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy), or classified as special concern as determined by the State. At-risk species may include Federally-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate animal or plant species; species listed by NatureServe as critically imperiled (G1), imperiled (G2), or vulnerable (G3); or species listed by a State agency as endangered, threatened, of special concern, or others with justification. Species classified by the State as a “species-at-risk” must be identified as such in its grant proposal. This list should be limited to the species that would reasonably be expected to benefit from the activities to be funded by this proposal.

“Private land” is considered any nongovernment-owned land.

A **“project”** is a discrete task to be undertaken by or with private landowners for the accomplishment of the defined LIP objectives.

Section A.

LIP Final Implementation Guidelines (FY 2007)

Program Requirements

- 1. What is the objective of this program?** The primary objective of this program is to establish or supplement State landowner incentive programs that protect and restore habitats on private lands, to benefit species identified in the State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) or classified as Special Concern by the State, or Federally listed, proposed, or candidate species or other species determined to be at-risk, and provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for habitat protection and restoration.
- 2. How will the Tribes participate in LIP?** The Service will allocate 10% of the total funds appropriated under LIP to Tribes for a competitive grant program that we will describe in a separate Federal Register notice. For Tribal LIP grant information contact Pat Durham, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Native American Liaison, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 3251, Washington, D.C. 20240 or call (202) 208-4133.
- 3. Does LIP require plans to be developed like the State Wildlife Grant Program and the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program?** No, LIP does not require development of a Wildlife Action Plan (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy). However, the Service anticipates that LIP will be an effective tool for implementing conservation actions for at-risk species on private lands that are identified in the States' CWCS.
- 4. Who can apply for a LIP grant?** The State agency with primary responsibility for fish and wildlife will be responsible for submitting all proposals to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance (FA). All other governmental entities, individuals, and organizations, including Tribes, may partner with or serve as a subgrantee to that fish and wildlife agency.

Fiscal Issues

- 5. How will the Service distribute the available funds?** Unless it is otherwise stipulated in the appropriation, the Service will allocate 10% of the funds to Tribes, 3% of the funds to the Service administer the program, and 87% of the funds for competitive grants (Tier 1 and Tier 2).
- 6. What is the non-Federal match requirement for LIP grants?** The Service requires a minimum of 25% non-Federal match for LIP grants (i.e. at least 25 percent of the total costs must come from sources other than LIP or other Federal funds). The U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands are exempt from matching requirements for this program (based on 48 U.S.C. 1469a. (d)).

- 7. May the required non-Federal match be in-kind contributions?** Yes. Allowable in-kind contributions are defined in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Part 12.64.
- 8. Are there funding limits (caps) for LIP?** Yes.
No State may receive more than 5% of the total funds available from the FY 2007 appropriation for Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants combined. The total amount available for Tier 1 and Tier 2 combined is \$1,029,510.
- 9. If some FY 2007 funds remain after awarding Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants, how will the Service make them available to the States?** We will announce subsequent requests for proposals until all LIP funds are awarded. States that have not reached the cap may submit an additional proposal during future requests for proposals.
- 10. Will interest accrue to the account holding LIP funds and if so how will it be used?** No. LIP funds were not approved for investing, and as a result no interest will accrue to the account.

Grant Administration

- 11. May a State submit more than one proposal?** States may submit one proposal each for Tier-2 grants under this notice. However, funding limits still apply, as described in the answer to Question 8.
- 12. What information must a State include in a Tier-1 and Tier-2 grant proposal?** A LIP grant proposal must include an Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) and must identify whether it is a Tier-1 or Tier-2 proposal. The proposal must also include a project statement describing the need, objectives, expected results or benefits, approach or procedures, location, and estimated cost for the proposed work (OMB Circular A-102). The expected results or benefits section must identify the State's discrete, obtainable and quantified performance measures expected to be accomplished (for example, the proposal identifies the number of acres of wetlands, or other types of habitat, stream miles to be restored, and/or number of at-risk species whose habitat within the State will be improved) that will address the goals of LIP and, at the same time, the Service's Long-Term Goals of Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Population (Goal 1.2) and Habitat Conservation (Goal 2.3). The grant proposal should also clearly identify how the minimum Tier-2 2007 LIP Ranking Criteria Guidance (see Section C page 8-11) are addressed. The Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) is available from FA at any Service Regional Office and in the Federal Assistance Toolkit.
- 13. What are the intended objectives of Tier-1 grants?** The Service intends that Tier-1 grants fund staff and associated support necessary to develop a new, or enhance an existing, landowner incentive program. Through administration of the program, development of plans, outreach, and other associated activities that assist in accomplishment of projects on private lands, these programs should benefit private landowners and other partners to help manage and protect habitats that benefit species-at-risk.

- 14. What are the intended objectives of Tier-2 grants?** The objectives of a Tier-2 grant should place a priority on the implementation of State programs that provide technical and financial assistance to the private landowner. Programs should emphasize the protection and restoration of habitats that benefit species-at-risk (see “species at risk” definition on page 1) on private lands. The Service generally intends a Tier-2 grant to fund the expansion of existing State landowner incentive programs or those created under Tier-1 grants.
- 15. What are the ranking criteria for Tier-2 grants?** The ranking criteria for Tier-2 grants can be found in Section B on pages 8-11. States are strongly encouraged to submit proposals that address the ranking criteria in the appropriate sections of the proposal as set forth in Section B.
- 16. Should a ranking criteria summary sheet be included with the Tier-2 proposal?** It is strongly recommended that a *ranking criteria summary sheet* be included with your proposal. This summary should include a short explanation of how and where (page numbers, section) your proposal specifically addresses each ranking criteria. The proposal should follow the ranking criteria both in content and in organization to obtain the maximum number of points during the ranking process.
- 17. Must a State identify its list of species-at-risk in its Tier-2 proposal?** Yes. In order to successfully respond to the program criteria, the State must have a list of their species-at-risk. This list should only include the species that would reasonably be expected to benefit from the activities identified in this proposal. Developing a list of species at risk (see “species at risk” definition on page 1) is the State’s responsibility. You should describe the process used to develop your State’s list and how you will alter it over time. States are encouraged to reference their State’s list in another accessible document rather than attach it to this proposal. Keep in mind, Congress intended for this program to help with “delisting” (i.e., species recovery) and in preventing other species in decline from being “Federally-listed.” While species that are currently hunted or fished in your State are not excluded from being designated species-at-risk, you should describe your rationale for including harvested species on the at-risk list to assist in the ranking/evaluation process.
- 18. How long should the Tier-2 proposal be?** Proposals must be limited to no more than 40 consecutively numbered pages including the signed Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), narrative and all appendices, tables and maps. The proposal must be a stand-alone document. Reviewers will not go to referenced websites for additional information.
- 19. Are there additional formatting criteria?** Yes. Electronic submittal of the Tier-2 proposal must be in PDF as one single document including the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), narrative, appendices, tables and maps. Attachments submitted as separate files will not be considered in the ranking process. Page numbers and the State name must be on every page.
- 20. Should an abstract be included with the Tier-2 proposal?** Yes, Tier-2 proposals must include a **one paragraph** abstract highlighting the types of activities and benefits expected to be achieved with 2007 LIP funding.

- 21. Should States that received Tier-2 funding in the past base their request on their ability to use LIP funds in the near term?** Yes. States that received funding in the past should base their funding request on their need for and ability to use additional LIP funds in the near term.
- 22. Will Tier-2 proposals be partially funded?** Partial funding of proposals is a possibility. States should keep this in mind when writing proposals. In the Approach Section, you may want to identify your willingness or unwillingness to accept partial funding and how partial funding would affect proposed work (reduced number of acres protected/restored, removal of certain activities or jobs, etc.)
- 23. Where should a State send Tier-2 grant proposals?** States should submit paper copies of all LIP proposals (Tier-2 Application for Federal Assistance and Narratives) to the appropriate Federal Assistance (Federal Aid) Regional Offices. States should **also** submit one electronic PDF file that includes both the signed Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) their Tier-2 proposals (Tier-2 Narrative) in electronic PDF format to the Washington Office (Genevieve_Larouche@fws.gov). Electronic proposals must be contained in one PDF file including appendices, tables and maps. Page numbers and the State name must be on every page.
- 24. When are Tier-2 proposals due to the Service?** The Service will accept proposals between its date of posting on grants.gov and 60 days after the date of posting. Both hard copies and electronic copies of the grant proposal must be received no later than the deadline in grants.gov.
- 25. What process will the Service use to evaluate and select Tier-2 proposals for funding?** The Service will evaluate all proposals that are received by the end of the period set forth in the answer to Question 24, above. Successful proposals will then be selected based on the Tier-2 Ranking Criteria Guidance (Section B) and the Final Implementation Guidelines. Tier-2 funding decisions will be subject to the final approval of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The Service will notify all applicants of the results as soon as practicable.
- 26. Once a Tier-2 proposal is selected for funding, what additional documents must the applicant submit and to whom?** In addition to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) submitted with the original proposal, the Service requires a schedule of work the State proposes to fund through this proposal. Additionally, the Service, in cooperation with the applicants, must address Federal compliance issues, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Regional Office FA staff can assist in explaining the procedures and documentation necessary for meeting these Federal requirements. The States must send this additional documentation to the appropriate Regional Office where FA staff will approve the Application for Federal Assistance to obligate funds. See the answer to Question 30 for Regional Office locations.

- 27. What reporting requirements must States meet once funds are obligated under a LIP grant agreement?** The Service requires an annual interim performance report for LIP Tier-1 and Tier-2 grants longer than fifteen months in duration. Annual interim performance reports are due within 90 days of the anniversary of the FA approval date of the Application for Federal Assistance. In addition, a final performance report and Financial Status Report (SF-269) are due to the Regional Office within 90 days of the Application for Federal Assistance ending date. In its annual performance report, the State must include a list of project accomplishments in relation to those that were planned in the proposal narrative. The number of upland and wetland acres and the number of riparian/stream miles protected, restored or improved (performance measures), and the species benefited should be provided. This information will help demonstrate the States' efforts and leadership in helping the LIP meet the Service's national goals for Fish and Wildlife Sustainability (1.2) and Habitat Conservation (2.3). The effectiveness of each State's program, as reported in its annual interim performance reports, will be an important factor considered during the grant award selection process in subsequent years.
- 28. What administrative requirements must States comply with in regard to LIP?** States must comply with 43 CFR, Part 12 that provides the administrative regulations and OMB Circular A-87 that provides cost principles (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars>).
- 29. Will landowners who have LIP projects implemented on their property be required to leave project improvements in place for a specific period?** States should address this issue in their grant proposals, landowner incentive programs, and agreements with individual landowners. Habitat improvements should remain in place to realize the desired benefits for species-at-risk.
- 30. Whom can I contact in the Service about the LIP program in my local or regional area?** Correspondence and telephone contacts for the Service are listed by Region below. States are encouraged to work with their Regional LIP Contact during the development of their Tier 2 proposals.

Region 1. Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
911 NE., 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181. LIP Contact: Barbara Behan,
503-231-6128; barbara_behan@fws.gov.

Region 2. Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
500 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 9019, PO Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103-
1306, LIP Contact: Susan MacMullin (505) 248-7465; susan_macmullin@fws.gov.

Region 3. Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, One Federal Drive, Fort Snelling,
Minnesota 55111-4056. LIP Contact: Ann Schneider, (612) 713-5146;
ann_schneider@fws.gov.

Region 4. Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30345. LIP Contact: Bob Gasaway, (404) 679-4169; bob_gasaway@fws.gov.

Region 5. Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035-9589. LIP Contact: Colleen Sculley, (413) 253-8509; colleen_sculley@fws.gov.

Region 6. Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225-0486. LIP Contact: Otto Jose, (303) 236-8156; otto_jose@fws.gov.

Region 7. Alaska.

Regional Director, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199. LIP Contact: Cliff Schleusner, (907) 786-3626; cliff_schleisner@fws.gov.

California/Nevada Office (CNO). California, Nevada.

Assistant Regional Manager, Division of Federal Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2606, Sacramento, CA 95825. LIP Contact: Becky Miller, (916) 978-6185; becky_miller@fws.gov.

Section B.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) National Review Team Ranking Criteria Guidance for Tier-2 Grant Proposals

State: _____

1. **OVERALL**—Proposal provides clear and sufficient detail to describe the State’s use of awarded funds from the LIP, and the State’s program has a high likelihood for success. (6 points total)
 - a. Proposal is easy to understand and contains discrete sections as described in 522 FW 1.3C: Need; Objective; Expected Results and Benefits; Approach; and Budget. (0–3 pts)
 - b. Proposal, taken as a whole, demonstrates that the State can implement a Landowner Incentive Program that has a high likelihood for success in conserving at-risk species on private lands (for example, agency support for program, dedicated staff in place to implement program, priorities clearly identified, processes in place to implement program, past successes, etc.). (0–3 pts)
2. **NEED**—The NEEDS section describes the urgency for implementing a LIP. States should describe how their LIP is a part of a broader scale conservation effort at the State or regional level. (5 points total)
 - a. Proposal clearly describes the urgency of need for a LIP to benefit at-risk species in the State. (0–2 pts)
 - b. Proposal clearly describes conservation needs for targeted at-risk species that relate directly to objectives and conservation actions described in other sections of the proposal. (0–3 pts)
3. **OBJECTIVES**—The OBJECTIVES section provides clear objectives that specify fully what on-the-ground activities or other results related activities are to be accomplished. (6 points total)
 - a. The objectives of the proposal describe discrete obtainable and quantifiable outputs to be accomplished for the target at-risk species (for example, the proposal identifies the number of acres of wetlands or other types of habitat, the number of stream miles to be restored, the number of landowners served, the number of management plans developed, etc.) (0–3 pts)
 - b. The objectives of the proposal describe discrete, obtainable and quantifiable outcomes to be accomplished for the target at-risk species (for example, the proposal identifies the number of at-risk species whose habitat within the State will be improved; the percentage increase in a population(s) of one or more at-risk species on LIP project sites; the increase in number of individuals of one or more at-risk species on LIP project sites, etc). (0–3 pts)
4. **EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS**—The EXPECTED RESULTS AND BENEFITS section clearly describes how the activities will benefit targeted at-risk species. (17 points total)
 - a. Proposal describes by name the species-at-risk to benefit from the proposal. (0–2 pt)
 - b. Proposal identifies the specific habitat type of the targeted at-risk species that will benefit

- from the proposed activities. (0–3 pts)
- c. Proposal makes clear connections between the conservation actions proposed and expected benefits for species and habitats (i.e., describes how conservation actions will result in benefits). (0–3 pts)
- d. Proposal describes the short-term benefits for at-risk species to be achieved within a 10-year period. (0–2 pts)
- e. Proposal describes the long-term benefits for at-risk species to be achieved beyond 10 years. (0–3 pts)
- f. Proposal identifies discrete conservation outcomes that will likely prevent the imminent extinction of one or more species. (0 or 4)

5. APPROACH— The APPROACH section clearly describes how program objectives, contractual and fiscal management, and fund distribution will be accomplished and monitored. (19 points total)

Program Implementation (5 points total)

- a. Proposal describes the conservation priorities for the State’s LIP and describes how these priorities address portions of conservation plans at a local, state, regional, or national scale, including the State’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. (0–2 pts)
- b. Proposal describes the specific types of conservation projects and/or activities to be undertaken to address these priorities and provides adequate detail to understand how these projects and/or activities will be implemented (which practices will be used, who will implement the practices, when the practices will be implemented, methodology for establishing cost shares for practices, etc.). (0–3 pts)

Fiscal Administrative Procedures—Proposal describes adequate management systems for fiscal and contractual accountability. (2 points total)

- c. Processes to ensure contractual and fiscal accountability between the State and private participating landowners (i.e., contract or memorandum of agreement). (0–1 pts)
- d. Proposal indicates that the State has an approved legal instrument to enter into agreements with landowners. (0–1 pt)

System for Fund Distribution—Proposal describes the State’s fair and equitable system for fund distribution. (6 points total)

- e. Proposal describes State’s selection or ranking criteria and process to select projects (include copies of any relevant ranking or selection forms). (0–2 pts)
- f. State’s ranking or selection criteria are adequate to select projects based on conservation priorities identified in the proposal. (0–2 pts)
- g. Project proposals will be (or were) subject to an objective selection procedure (for example, internal ranking panel, diverse ranking panel comprising external agency members and/or members of the public, computerized ranking model, or other non-ranking selection process). (0–2 pts)

Monitoring—The MONITORING section describes State’s compliance and biological monitoring plan for LIP including annual monitoring and evaluation of progress toward desired program objectives, results, and benefits. (6 points total)

- h. Proposal describes *compliance monitoring* that will ensure accurate and timely evaluation to determine if landowners have completed and are maintaining agreed-upon practices in accordance with landowner agreement, including the process for addressing landowners who fail to comply with agreements. (0–3 pts)
- i. Proposal describes *biological monitoring* that will ensure species and habitats are monitored and evaluated adequately to determine the effectiveness of LIP-sponsored activities and progress towards accomplishment of short- and long-term benefits (Monitoring items may entail approaches for developing monitoring protocols and establishing baselines, monitoring standards, timeframes for conducting monitoring activities, and expectations for monitoring.) (0–3 pts)

6. BUDGET—The BUDGET section clearly identifies funds for use on private lands, identifies percentage of non-federal cost match, and identifies all previous LIP Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding awards. (6 points total)

- a. Proposal describes the percentage of the State’s total LIP Tier-2 program funds identified for use on private lands as opposed to staff and related administrative support. (3 points total)

0 point if this is not addressed or admin is >25%

1 points if admin is >15 to 25 %

2 points if admin is >5 to 15 %

3 points if admin is 0 to 5 %

Use on private lands includes all costs directly related to implementing on-the-ground projects with LIP funds. Activities considered project use include: technical guidance to landowner applicants; habitat restoration, enhancement, or management; purchase of conservation easements (including costs for appraisals, land survey, legal review, etc.); biological monitoring of Tier 2 project sites; compliance monitoring of Tier 2 projects. Staffing costs should only be included in this category when the staff-time will directly relate to implementation of a Tier 2 project. Standard Indirect rates negotiated between the State and Federal Government should also be included under Project Use.

Staff and related administrative support includes all costs related to administration of LIP. Activities considered administrative include outreach (presentations, development or printing of brochures, etc.); planning; research; administrative staff support; staff supervision; overhead charged by subgrantees unless the rate is an approved negotiated rate for Federal grants.

- b. The Budget section and the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) identify the percentage of nonfederal cost sharing (3 points total).

(Note: I.T. = Insular Territories)

0 point if nonfederal cost share is 25 %

1 point if nonfederal cost share is > 25 to 30 % (>0 to 25 % I.T.)

2 points if non-federal cost share is > 30 to 35 % (>25 to 30 % I.T.)

3 points if nonfederal cost share is > 35 % (>30 % I.T.)

- c. Proposal identifies percentage of previously awarded funds (excluding 2006 fiscal year's awarded funds) that have been expended or encumbered. (Expended or encumbered funds are those Tier 2 funds that a State either has spent or has dedicated to a landowner through a signed contract between the landowner and the State. Funds must be expended/encumbered on or before the due date for submittal of the Tier 2 grant proposal to the USFWS) (subtract maximum of 5 points total.)
- 5 points subtracted if ≤ 25 % funds expended/encumbered
 - 3 points subtracted if > 25 to 50 % funds expended/encumbered
 - 1 point subtracted if > 50 to 75 % funds expended/encumbered
 - 0 point subtracted if > 75 to 100 % funds expended/encumbered

Total Score Possible = 59 points

Total Score _____